THE POWER OF YOUR LEADERSHIP LEGACY

CHAPTER FEATURED IN EXPERTS & INFLUENCERS: MOVE FORWARD WITH PURPOSE ANTHOLOGY

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The Power of Your Leadership Legacy

By Amy Riley

All successful, courageous leaders who achieve extraordinary results have something in common. In my work over the past two decades of coaching executives and developing leaders at all levels, I've identified the one trait that powerful leaders share. They all have a defined purpose to their leadership. They are committed to something bigger than themselves. There is an intent guiding and defining their leadership. **The defined purpose these courageous leaders have I call a leadership legacy.**

A leadership legacy is an aspiration about *how* you want to be known or about *what* you want to create. A leadership legacy is something that you can be demonstrating, embodying, and sharing right away. It can be an initiative, set of products, or improved processes. It can also be a leadership trait for which you want to be known and foster in your organization.

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Examples of leadership legacies include a fully optimized enterprise-wide software system, an innovative culture, and the creation of teams that operate with trust and transparency. With any of these there is work to be done in the moment like defining what fully optimized means, rewarding innovative behaviors, and creating a shared dashboard. There is also a legacy of work, skills, and thought processes that will be continuously created and left behind for others to profit from and enjoy such as real-time data accessible anywhere in the organization, processes that encourage innovation, and employees who know how to be authentically trusting with others.

MORE EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP LEGACIES

Kim McGarry, Global Controller and Chief Accounting Officer at Morningstar focuses on leading people. Everything she had to say centered around enabling people to BE their best: "build relationships," "give people latitude to make mistakes," "see people blossom," "holistic learning," "ensuring a cultural fit." Kim is focused on people thriving and helping them progress on their career journey, no matter the destination.

Brent Kedzierski has been referred to as "the dynamic force for good" relative to organizational transformation. Currently the Head of Learning Strategy and Innovation for Shell Oil, he's consistently taken businesses to the next level against complex challenges. He looks to learn from and turn the biggest resisters into champions. He's comfortable with healthy tension on a global scale, while looking at how to disrupt the status quo and infuse value at each process step.

As President and CEO of SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management), it probably doesn't come as a huge surprise that Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, is known as a developer of people. He believes every one of us can excel. If someone is not excelling, then it's a mismatch. The individual is in the wrong job or the wrong culture. He advises new leaders to "know yourself, find your fit, and then gamble on yourself."

Embracing diversity is Aneesa Muthana's leadership legacy. As the President, CEO, and Co-Owner of Pioneer Service, she keenly oversees the selection and development of the team. Aneesa actively promotes manufacturing to women and youth and encourages leaders to tell their stories so others can understand and appreciate varying views.

There's a wide range of possibilities. And YOU are the one to decide.

Some of you may already be really clear about your leadership legacy. Others of you may need to take some reflection time before declaring yours. You want to take the time to choose a legacy that inspires you and taps into your passion. Yet, it doesn't need to take a long time. Take the next week – 2 weeks at most – to reflect and acknowledge the purpose of your leadership. You can use the following exercise to help you clarify and declare your powerful leadership legacy.

Declare Your Leadership Legacy Exercise

What are your initial ideas for your leadership legacy?

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_____

Reflect daily: When do you provide value? While being engaged with what activities?

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_____

Reflect daily: When do you feel energized? While being engaged with what activities?

_____

_____

Your leadership legacy will have you providing value and feeling energized. What's your leadership legacy?

_____

When you declare your leadership legacy you get three Superpowers guaranteed to make you a powerful leader.

1. **YOU ARE BOLD AND EXTRAORDINARY.** A legacy has a big agenda and represents a big commitment. When you look to your leadership legacy for advice, it's going to tell you to be bold. Your legacy will have you setting aside normal human considerations and creating the extraordinary.

   Let me give you an example*. I worked with a leader, Maria, who felt pressure to speed up system implementation timelines and give in to a certain outspoken and passionate senior leader. Yet, when I encouraged Maria to ask herself what her legacy of a fully optimized enterprise-wide system would want, she had to respond with "more dialogue and benchmarking." She knew the functional leaders needed more information about the capabilities and options for the system from companies who had already been through the process.*

   Maria stayed committed to her aspiration, put her personal discomfort aside, and made the career risky move to push back against a senior leader. And, it got shaky for a while. Some, who had previously been on board, questioned her decision to go up against a high-powered leader. It was the first in a string of decisions where Maria had to look to her legacy – and not her self-protective instincts – for guidance. It wasn't an easy time, yet she stuck with her consistent messaging, kept working the process, and her aspirations and big picture commitment prevailed.

   Maria's leadership legacy was implemented and fully optimized by year two, which represents a very impressive timeline for systems of this nature. Several functional leaders told Maria they were glad they took the time upfront to learn about and workout key design decisions and implementation points. And, most importantly, the cross-functional leaders in this organization were connected, aligned, and operating more cohesively than ever before. They had faster and better solutions for customers.

2. **YOU GET KNOWN FOR THE WORK YOU MOST WANT TO DO.** When you're not taking on 27 different priorities and you're focused on what's aligned with your leadership legacy, you build your brand. You get known for the value you provide doing the work you're passionate about.

   You know those senior executives who are promoted every 18 to 24 months as they've moved up in their careers? This happens in the big multinationals. These executives are not being tapped for promotion each time for a *different* skillset. They are being tapped again and again for the *same value* they are known for creating.

3. **YOU DO MORE WITH LESS.** When you're working on your leadership legacy, you're leveraging your strengths. Strength work increases your resilience and nets you your best return on the energy you expend.

   Ramki is an experienced leader who participated in a recent leadership development program I facilitated. He is a great example of someone who gets energized, rather than drained, as he works in the area of his leadership legacy.

   Ramki loves strategizing. When he opens up a blank PowerPoint document and begins mapping plans to enter a new market, he gets lost for hours. He knows he thinks in

macrolevel ways that others don't. When he brings his head back up, he's excited to tell you about how he sees it all coming to fruition. It's inspiring to witness the spark in his eyes and hear the energy in his voice. This is the unique value he brings. He knows it and owns it. He also recognizes that he'll need a team of talented people, with skills different than his own, to implement what he envisions. A team of people living their own legacies.

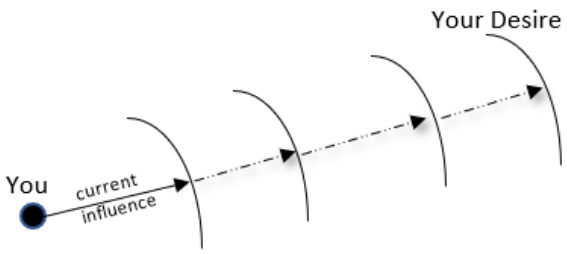
Once you've declared your leadership legacy, what next?

START IMMEDIATELY. Often leaders are stopped because they don't think what they can immediately do will be enough. They don't see it making a difference, so why bother. We get wrapped up in our overwhelming concern or critically important desire, and then we get stalled in our minds and are not powerfully influencing what we can. What we want can feel so big and important and out of our control, that in spite of knowing that doing nothing will leave us with more of the same, we do nothing.

What fits into this category for you? What desires are overwhelming for you? Do you want to move to a completely different business model? Do you want to have your sales team and production better aligned and don't know how to start to create that? (and might even doubt it's possible?) Do you have ideas to transform your industry? Do you see the possibility for the world's people to experience or think about something differently?

For courageous leaders, who see possibilities that are way beyond what's available today, the picture often looks like this:

You might be able to see how far the influence you currently have, related to this desire, can get you. You might be able to see that milestone, goal or horizon.



Yet, it gets fuzzy and unclear after that. This future path that you can't currently see clearly keeps you from taking the actions to get to the first seeable horizon. Why bother? You don't know how you'd possibly move forward from there.

And that's part of the point. You don't know how it will go from there. Conversations you start could get more people interested in your desire. These people may have ideas and connections you are not even able to imagine today. You may discover others who are working towards the same or similar desire. You might want to partner with these people. Circumstances could shift – dynamics in the organization, marketplace and/or world – that make your desire more palpable.

A few years back, I was working with a client to develop and facilitate an Emerging Leaders Program. Participants in this program were expected to identify and lead a project to completion or to a significant milestone during the year-long program. One of the new leaders in Sales, Morten, had an idea and an opportunity to do something the company had never done before. It would ultimately involve taking a process that was generated and sold in one division of the company and using it in a new application with a different division's customers. In Morten's mind, he knew it could all be done.

Yet, it felt like a very big and complex endeavor to undertake. He wasn't sure how to make it happen, who to get on board in what order or what exactly he was asking some areas of the business to do differently. His boss was sending him to some people, yet messages and next steps quickly got messy and contradictory.

We sat down for one of our coaching sessions and I asked Morten to get out a blank sheet of paper and we outlined the horizons or milestones in order, as best as he could define them that day. At the same time, I encouraged him to identify each leader/influencer he'd need to get on board, including the GMs of both divisions and the VP of Operations, whose influence he'd ultimately need to help determine how costs and revenues could possibly be shared between the groups.

He now had a list of what to do and who to talk to about this opportunity. We talked through how to best position ideas with various leaders, the most effective way to tackle tasks and how long he'd pursue this until he needed to pause it for now and select a different project for the development program. Yet, neither of us would have predicted what ultimately created momentum for Morten and his project.

A lab manager, Melinda, got just as passionate about the idea as Morten. She became a partner in influencing senior leadership. She was excited for a whole different set of reasons. She saw the challenge and the chance for development and increased variety for her lab technicians. Morten and Melinda kept talking and working the opportunity from different angles until the pieces were in place to move forward. Customers were testing samples before Morten finished his Emerging Leaders Program.

INSPIRE OTHERS TO DECLARE THEIR LEADERSHIP LEGACIES. I believe every leader has a leadership legacy. Think of the power and the results you could produce if every member on your team or every colleague/partner working with you had a leadership legacy and the 3 superpowers. You'd be unstoppable!

You can encourage all of your colleagues to declare their leadership legacies. Take them through the information in this chapter. Tell them what a leadership legacy is, the superpowers they'll get when they declare one, and how they can relate to their legacy over time. Then, you can all support one another to produce results related your leadership legacies. This kind of commitment to one another's leadership purpose and passion can quickly deepen the bond and trust in your work relationships.

Recently, I coached a leader named Tanya. During our work, she declared her leadership legacy of connecting people and ideas to create new possibilities. Tanya was highly energized as she played up this strength of hers, and she was instrumental in having her organization solve some complex and long-standing problems by bringing people with diverse experience and ideas together in the same room. She kept saying, "I can't believe I can make such a difference by doing something that I love!"

Soon after, Tanya also said, "I wish everyone could work like this." I replied that they could and asked her what connections she wanted to make. It was a lightbulb moment! She started rolling out the idea of declaring leadership legacies to her team the following week. Within a few weeks, everyone had their leadership legacies posted in their workspaces and began to talk about how to create their own legacy and support others to live into theirs. Tanya put two new items on the agenda for department meetings: What have you done recently to fulfill your leadership legacy? What are you focused on next for your leadership legacy? Tanya was floored by the connection and the momentum this created. There were mover peer to peer conversations and collaboration. The group's employee engagement scores were the

highest in the division and the results followed. The team met all of their objectives in the annual bonus structure, which was a rare occurrence in this organization.

Tanya didn't stop there. She asked her manager if she could share the concept of leadership legacies at their next staff meeting. Two of the departments with whom Tanya's team works the most, embraced the idea. The head of one of these departments had moments of concern about giving employees the green light to work on passion projects and not get the work in front of them done. Tanya stayed in close touch with this leader and what they found was that those concerns were unfounded. The team members brought more energy and their strengths to their current work, sometimes finding a whole new way to approach tasks. And if they did find other cross functional projects in which to get involved, they didn't spend excessive amounts of time on those initiatives. They were contributing their strengths and able to make a high impact with little effort.

Jessica was a great example of this. Her leadership legacy was to simplify and streamline. Project teams would bring her in after they had conducted their research and were at the opportunity definition stage. Jessica could join the team's efforts for an hour and provide valuable insights and different models of how they could think about the challenges ahead. Plus, the knowledge she gained from other project teams helped her own department think and operate more holistically.

Spread the superpowers of a leadership legacy to those around you.

GO FOR EXTRAORDINARY. Many leaders are afraid to put the really big goal out there. They think that if they don't achieve the goal, that will discredit them or demotivate those involved. Yet, putting the really big goal out there is how you get the most extraordinary results. You want to put the target so far out there, that people have to reimagine every aspect of how the work is getting done. You want and need them to dig in and look under every rock. **Incremental goals won't get you the revolutionary ideas.**

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If you shoot for the stars, and you only get 75% of the way there, you are still reaching the moon. If you shoot for less than the stars, then you might not push thinking to the point where you can reach the moon.

I've led the design effort of a Leader Fundamentals program with an extraordinary client team this past year. In this Fortune 50 software company, they are accustomed to making big technical asks and getting them fulfilled. When brainstorming, they go for the ideal. They ask: "Can we…?" "What if we could…?" and start by assuming they can! While searching out a solution, every possibility is considered. This is because they are aiming to create an extraordinary experience for the leaders who participate in this program.

We've created an engaging and informative multi-media program with calls coming in from experienced leaders to share examples of how it's done, calls coming in from new leaders who have questions just like them, slides, videos, interactive whiteboards, application activities, a place to capture their next steps and more, and it's all done with 1 facilitator and 1 producer because much of it is pre-recorded. This program is highly interactive and scalable globally.

Collectively, we are going for 100% satisfaction, 100% understanding of leader expectations and 100% of participants reporting that they'd recommend the program for other new leaders. When developing this program, we iterated on ideas, we kept enhancing and enhancing, we ran program segments for large groups of stakeholders and we piloted the program in all the world's regions. Those responsible for delivery and production, spent hours and hours playing the videos in the platform at different times of day, changing up variables to find the very best settings for optimum streaming and viewing.

Working with this client team has been exciting, engaging, challenging and most of all inspiring. I'm so proud of the program we are rolling out. That's because we are a team going for extraordinary.

For those of you who want to go for extraordinary, here is a powerful exercise to support you.

Go for Extraordinary Exercise

What's a project, endeavor or initiative for which you want to achieve extraordinary results?

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What's your big goal?

_____

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Why is this important to you, to others, to the world?

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What results would be truly extraordinary?

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In what aspects of the work are you going for extraordinary?

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In what aspects of the work are you not yet going for extraordinary?

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How could you go for extraordinary in ways that you're not today?

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A leadership legacy is an aspiration about *how* you want to be known or about *what* you want to create.

When you declare and begin living into your leadership legacy, you get 3 SUPERPOWERS that transform your leadership and results you and your team create:

1. You are bold and extraordinary.
2. You get known for the work you most want to do.
3. You do more with less.

I want you to go for YOUR extraordinary. You already have everything you need within reach. You're the one to make it happen. Use your resources and influence, grow them exponentially and achieve your dreams. You can do it. You've got **The Courage of a Leader**.

Amy L. Riley

Amy L. Riley is an internationally renowned speaker, author and consultant. She has over two decades of experience developing leaders at all levels. Her clients include Cisco Systems, Deloitte and Barclays.

As a trusted leadership coach and consultant, Amy has worked with hundreds of leaders one-on-one, and thousands more as part of a group, to fully step into their leadership, create amazing teams and achieve extraordinary results.

Amy's most popular keynote speeches are:

The Courage of a Leader: The Power of a Leadership Legacy

The Courage of a Leader: Create a competitive advantage with sustainable, results-producing cross-system collaboration
The Courage of a Leader: Accelerate Trust with Your Team, Customers and Community
The Courage of a Leader: How to Lead, Sell and Succeed Virtually

Amy earned a Master's of Science in Training and Development (MSTD), with an emphasis in Organization Development (OD), from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. She is a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst (CPBA), a certified Tiara International LLC Coach and certified in the Meyers-Briggs Type Instrument.

Her new #1 international best-selling book is entitled, ***The Courage of a Leader: How to Inspire, Engage and Get Extraordinary Results.***

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